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Analysis of Proposal P

The Proposed Detroit Charter



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 Proposal P on the Detroit Primary Ballot: The Proposed Detroit Charter <u>full report</u>.

Access the report on your phone, laptop, or desktop.

Proposed New Detroit City Charter

- Proposal P seeks voter approval during the August 3rd primary election.
- Culmination of three years of work by the Detroit Charter Revision Commission convened in 2018.
- Fate of Proposal P could change depending on how the Michigan Supreme Court rules on its qualifications for the ballot.
- Oral arguments were made before the high court on July 7th; a decision is pending.

What is a city charter?

Has three essential purposes:

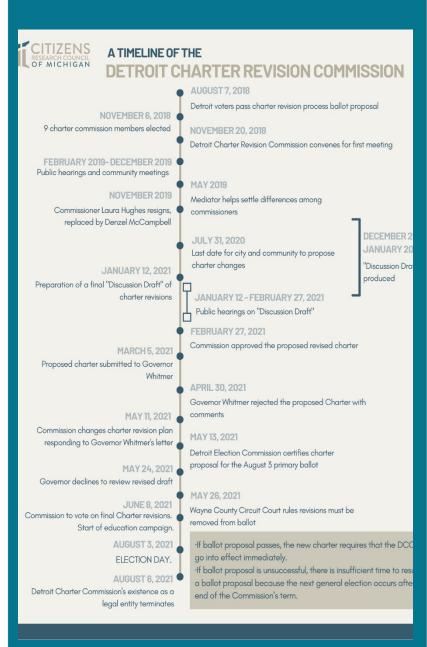
- 1. To outline the election process for city government.
- 2. To create the structure and powers for providing city services such as establishing the form of government, key departments, commissions, or boards.
- 3. To provide enough structure to ensure efficiency in city operations.
 - Not be too prescriptive as to limit the ability of elected officials to respond to changing times.



Detroit City Charter

Brief History of 2018 Revision Commission

- 14.2% of registered Detroit voters voted on charter question at the 2018 August primary.
- Question to revise charter usually brought to voters every 16 years.
- Charter revision commissions have a three-year span to complete duties.
- Detroit Charter Revision Commission held over 200 formal and informal community meetings and conversations.
- Resulted in approx. 315 proposed revisions for the Commission's consideration.





Proposed Changes

- Can be broadly categorized as expansive and ambitious progressive policy reforms:
 - Redefinition of elected and appointed positions.
 - Formation of structures and process to ensure increased representation and equity for Detroit residents.
 - Increased access to city services and programs.
 - Inclusion of strategies to increase citizen involvement and government transparency through an equitable development framework.

Shift in Power Between Executive & Legislative Branches

- Retains the strong mayor-council form of government.
- Diminishment of the mayor's appointment power with public boards and officers as well as executive functions:
 - ➤ Advisory commissions
 - ➤ Chief of police
 - > Proposing and developing a master plan for the city
- Blurring of responsibilities and lines of accountability create confusion in the separation of powers between both branches.



Transparency

- Proposed charter attempts to increase transparency in city government:
 - Specific directives for executive and legislative agencies or departments to provide reports or post city documents online or to public boards
 - ➤ Notifications of hearings about ordinances on non-conforming uses & structures and requests
 - ➤ Contractor employee reports
 - ➤ City council members required to state for the record basis and reasoning for a vote they make on a matter
 - ➤ Mayor required to hold 2 community meetings in each district in 7-month period



Citizen Involvement in City Government

- Authorizes 47 new elected positions and creates 102 new appointed positions.
- Mayoral & city council appointments must be residents and as demographically representative of the city as possible.
- Eight new advisory commissions and creation of community advisory councils per district.
- Referendum prior to the establishment or participation in a public authority or agency.
- Mayor must annually evaluate the social and economic impact of all public authorities and agencies.

Social Justice and Equity

- A prominent theme in proposed charter is a focus on providing more government assistance to low income and marginalized residents.
- Public health focus through the Health Department.
- Creation of a health in all policies (HiAP) taskforce.
- New water-rate system and creation of a water amnesty program.
- New tax abatement requirements with organizations.
- Creation of new departments:
 - ➤ Department of Disability Affairs, Office of Environmental Justice and Sustainability, Office of Economic and Consumer Empowerment



Social Justice and Equity

- Reimagining of policing by altering the role of the police:
 - ➤ City budget to equitably fund social service programs, project and activities that impact and may decrease costs associated with provision of police services.
 - ➤ New police training guidelines and programs.
 - Establishment of civilian rights in police provisions.
 - > Removal of qualified immunity provisions from police officer evaluations.
- New tax relief program and a new overassessment relief program.
- New public broadband and technology commission for sustainable development.
- New reduced fare program for all public transportation.



Other Avenues for Action

- Create ordinances or resolutions for programs and projects.
- Develop public and private partnerships in the city to implement and fund programs.
- Engage the city's broad non-profit sector to assist with the provision and implementation of services and programs.
- Engage the vast number of foundations that work and serve the city on a variety of social justice and equity issues.
- Utilize state and federal resources and programs that are in discussion by the current administrations.



Government Efficiency

 Prescribing too many departments in a city charter creates potential for overlap and duplication between departments and responsibilities.

 Constrains the ability of the mayor and city council to react to changing service and financial needs.

• Provisions that are overly prescriptive can restrict city government's ability to adapt to changing times.

Financial Impact

- Mandates new costs, some of which are relatively expensive.
- Incursion of new costs must come at the expense of resources used to fund existing costs or incurring budget deficits.
- Projected cost of charter falls somewhere between city and commission's projections.
- Detroit's opportunities to increase funding rests in expanding its tax base.
- Detroit still legally obligated to the 2014 Plan of Adjustment.
- City must maintain a balanced budget to remain out of state oversight.



Conclusion

- Before voting on whether to revise the charter, voters should consider a few questions:
 - 1. Can this problem be addressed by a change in policy or the passage of an ordinance in city council?
 - 2. Should a solution to this problem be sought by putting new officials in office?
 - 3. Might state or federal legislation and programming address this problem more effectively?
 - 4. Can the change be made by charter amendment brought forth by city council as opposed to a charter revision?

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